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PRESS RELEASE

State Officials Remind Public to Practice Outdoor Safety Measures During Turkey Hunting Season

Outdoor Users Asked to Practice Social Distancing, Outdoor Safety, and Respect for All

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs

Department of Fish and Game

Department of Conservation & Recreation

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BOSTON — With more people seeking outdoor recreation in Massachusetts’ open spaces during the COVID-19 State of Emergency, state officials want to remind hunters and other outdoor users to practice common-sense safety measures during the upcoming turkey hunting season. A special Youth Turkey Hunt Day will be held this Saturday, April 25, and the regular spring turkey hunting season is April 27 to May 23.

“More people are enjoying the state’s conservation lands while practicing social distancing during the COVID-19 State of Emergency,” **said Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Kathleen Theoharides**. “While hunting is a safe, healthy, and highly regulated activity in Massachusetts, we want to remind hunters, hikers, bikers, equestrians and others to practice both social distancing and common-sense outdoor safety when visiting open spaces.”

Turkey hunters are reminded about the following precautions:

- Know when and where hunting is allowed.
- Always treat your firearm as if it is loaded.
- Keep the muzzle pointed in a safe direction. Keep the safety “on” and your finger off the trigger.
- Be sure of your target and what lies beyond it before you shoot.
- Be safe, be seen. Avoid wearing red, white, blue, or black clothing – these colors are associated with male turkeys.
- Be respectful and courteous to other outdoor users.

Other outdoor visitors are advised to take these outdoor safety precautions during turkey hunting season:

- Know when and where hunting is allowed.
- Be safe, be seen. A brightly colored orange vest or hat will help you stay visible.
- Keep pets leashed and visible.
- Stay on marked trails.
- Make your presence known. Talk or whistle to identify yourself as a person.
- Be respectful and courteous – hunter harassment is unlawful.

“We want people to know that hunting is a safe activity and that everyone should feel comfortable using the woods at any time of year,” **said Department of Fish and Game Commissioner Ron Amidon.** “Hunting accidents among hunters are rare, and incidents involving non-hunters are even more rare.”

“We want to remind the hunting community to remember and practice all of the rules of safe hunting, ethics, and courtesy,” **said Colonel Shaun Santos, Director of the Massachusetts Environmental Police.** “Likewise, non-hunters should stay on trails, make themselves visible to hunters, and be respectful.”

During the Youth Turkey Hunt Day on Saturday, April 25, hunting hours begin a half hour before sunrise and end at 5:00p.m. Hunting hours during the regular turkey hunting season start a half hour before sunrise and end at 12:00pm. Hunting on Sundays is prohibited in Massachusetts. More information on turkey hunting, new regulations and safety tips can be found [here \(/info-details/spring-turkey-season-2020\)](/info-details/spring-turkey-season-2020).

“During the COVID-19 State of Emergency, we encourage all state park users to visit during the week, or early in the day on weekends, and stay close to home to avoid crowding,” **said Department of Conservation and Recreation Commissioner Jim Montgomery.**

“Additionally, visitors are asked to stay on marked trails, respect other users, wear bright colored clothing during times of turkey hunting, and remain visible at all times.”

Getting out into nature is a great way to support your mental and physical health year-round. To enjoy the outdoors responsibly during the COVID-19 public health emergency, remember to stay close to home and keep visits short, avoid crowds, practice good

hygiene, keep pets leashed, wear facemasks, and stay six feet apart from other visitors at all times.

In addition to the varied offerings at DCR state forests and parks, all MassWildlife Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) remain open to the public to enjoy for fishing, hunting, walking, birding, and other nature-based activities. The public is encouraged to visit lesser-known properties. Choose a different location or time to visit if conditions seem crowded. To find WMAs or state forests and parks near you, please visit the [MassWildlife Lands Viewer \(/how-to/masswildlife-lands-viewer\)](#) and [DCR's state parks guide. \(/guides/visiting-massachusetts-state-parks-guide#-find-a-massachusetts-state-park-\)](#)

For general outdoor safety tips, see: [https://www.mass.gov/outdoor-recreation-safety-tips \(/outdoor-recreation-safety-tips\)](https://www.mass.gov/outdoor-recreation-safety-tips (/outdoor-recreation-safety-tips))

For more information about firearms safety, see: [https://www.mass.gov/service-details/firearms-safety \(/service-details/firearms-safety\)](https://www.mass.gov/service-details/firearms-safety (/service-details/firearms-safety))

For safety tips for non-hunters, see: [https://www.mass.gov/service-details/safety-tips-for-non-hunters \(/service-details/safety-tips-for-non-hunters\)](https://www.mass.gov/service-details/safety-tips-for-non-hunters (/service-details/safety-tips-for-non-hunters))

For information about hunting in state parks, see: [https://www.mass.gov/hunting-in-the-parks \(/hunting-in-the-parks\)](https://www.mass.gov/hunting-in-the-parks (/hunting-in-the-parks))

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Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs

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EEA seeks to protect, preserve, and enhance the Commonwealth's environmental resources while ensuring a clean energy future for the state's residents. Through the stewardship of open space, protection of environmental resources, and enhancement of clean energy, the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs works tirelessly to make Massachusetts a wonderful place to live, work, and raise a family.

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Department of Fish and Game [\(/orgs/department-of-fish-and-game\)](/orgs/department-of-fish-and-game)

The Department of Fish and Game works to preserve the state's natural resources. We exercise responsibility over the Commonwealth's marine and freshwater fisheries, wildlife species, plants, and natural communities, as well as the habitats that support them.

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Department of Conservation & Recreation

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DCR manages state parks and oversees more than 450,000 acres throughout Massachusetts. It protects, promotes, and enhances the state's natural, cultural, and recreational resources.

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